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sure them because the sense of solidity and support, so essential in a capital or other architectural feature, would be lost. The parts must not only be strong, constructively, but they must give a strength to the eye. The moral, therefore, clearly is that in any case, in such a position, the direct imitation of the natural forms is a mistake. In the third period, that of the fifteenth century, the foliate forms became very arbitrary, and there is often little or no suggestion of nature in them (see Figure Two), being, in most cases, such as a man could most readily and effectively produce by gouge and chisel, unfettered by any idea of imitation of any natural form. With certain limitations and exceptional examples allowed for, one may say that the fall from the previous excellence was final, complete and hopeless, and that the decoration of the fifteenth century, or perpendicular period, was almost wholly bad. The first style was good; the second showed great appreciation of nature, but failed from having too high an ambition; the third failed from having no appreciation of nature at all, but supplemented the purer feeling by a petty complacency in their skill of hand.

Where, as in wall paper, things repeat mechanically and frequently, the forms should be conventionalized. It is an insult to the infinite variety of nature to repeat at every few inches the same bunch of roses or the same bird in the same position, and engaged in the same act. Hand-work, on the contrary, may justly be varied; and even if we confine ourselves to our roses we are able to produce a sufficient identification in the grouping to prevent the tedious sense of sameness and thus produce unity in variety and variety in unity. Machinery most readily produces identity of result, while the human hand and brain most readily produce variety of result; each, therefore, should be employed in the direction for which it is most fitted. Though we admire the long rows of Corinthian capitals, all exactly alike, in some noble temple, or the stately avenue of sphinxes in part of some grand temple in the Valley of the Nile, one cannot help feeling that the word "individuality" has been crushed in their production, and we turn with a feeling of refreshment to the play of fancy seen in all the varied details of some grand old Gothic pile and breathe a freer air. In our sketch based on the crocus flower (see Fig. one) we have endeavored to steer midway between a cold conventionalism and an inappropriate naturalism. As the forms repeat mechanically, and at short intervals a free and semi-pictorial rendering would be undesirable, and the symmetrical effect of the group and the regular alternation of leaf and flower give that measure of conventionalism which the case seems to require, while the forms are sufficiently true to nature to enable us to recall something of the beauty of the real flower, we have, in the same way, endeavored in our two panels, based on the hawthorn foliage and fruit, to steer the middle course. For the purposes of our design we have assumed that only two colors are available, a dark ground color and a lighter tint upon it—how far we have been successful in giving an idea of the beauty of the hawthorn under these limitations is a matter that we must leave to others to judge; one sketch, at all events, shows our own idea of what such a treatment should be.

Sometimes, in addition to the almost inevitable necessity of repetition, conventionalism is still further forced upon us by some exigency of the manufacture, as in weaving, where everything has to be worked in squares, and the outlines all look like flights of steps, a fatal bar is placed in the way of an adequate representation of the grace and delicacy of nature. This may be very well noticed in carpets and lace curtains. A clever and practiced design for this class of goods will produce an approx-

imation to nature under this limitation that is often surprising; but the struggle is, after all, too unequal, and the result can only be tolerated when the squares are so small that at a little distance the eye fails to perceive them. In such a case a frank recognition of the inadequacy of the means to reproduce the flowing lines and delicate curves of nature, and the consequent recourse to a conventionalized treatment, is far preferable to striving after a result that is, at least, but a caricature.

Why not devise some more honest calculator than a gas meter? A recent case in England shows the meter registered 86,000 feet above the quantity consumed, and several cases in this country have shown us that it is an ordinary error here. We know of nothing grander than to see the householder mortgaging his property to pay his gas bill, but the question will sometimes arise in the house keepers mind, "Does that meter ever make a mistake on the other side?"

ONE of the most practical ideas that has been given the young art student for some time, was that offered by Mr. Sparkes, the Principal of the National Art Training Schools, at their recent exhibition. The Principal said: "I advise all fifth-rate artists to take stock of their weaknesses and find some other way of earning their living. There are some people who think they must be designers because they can paint and draw a little. I knew a man of that kind, who found out his mistake, and is now very rich through selling bottled beer."

THE Renaissance is a style that goes well with luxury, rich carpets, silks, gold and bright colors. It is very well suited, for example, to be used in decorating a lady's boudoir, to be associated with rose color or pale blue hangings.

MODERN HOUSES: THEIR STYLE AND DECORATION.

BY R. B. PRESTON, A.R.I.B.A.

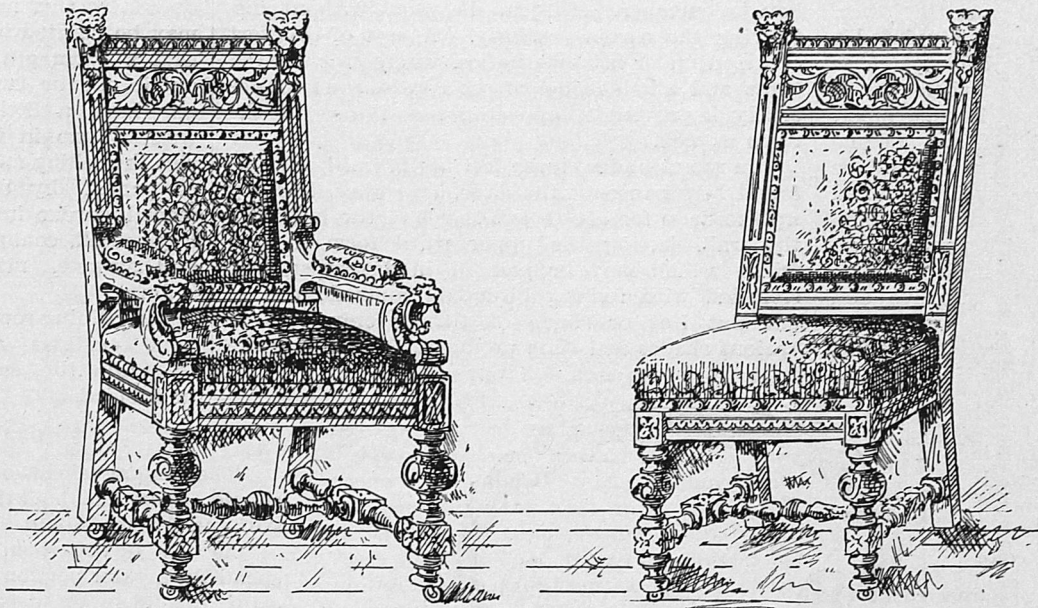
[From *The British Architect*.]

ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE.

THE floors of the entrance halls of our middle-class houses are, as a rule, either boarded or flagged, and are usually covered with oil-cloth or linoleum, which soon becomes shabby and wears out. The dust and dirt also collect underneath. In the first case, the boards may be taken up and the floor filled in between the joists with concrete and tiling, or marble mosaic laid therein, always forming, if possible, a sunk space for the mat. Broad masses of plain tiles, four inches or six inches square, of either red, gray or buff, are always more satisfactory than elaborate patterns, and have the advantage of being cheaper and also less liable to get loose, for it must be remembered that a tile floor laid upon joists in this way is never so lasting as when laid upon a solid foundation. In the second case the margins of the flags may be painted a good warm color, or a border of incised lines may be cut and filled in with colored cements. Sometimes the flags are laid in squares placed diagonally; in a case of this sort, a good effect may be produced, at no very great expense, by filling in the joints with colored cement, and placing a small red or black tile in the corner of each flag, which, of course, must be cut out to receive it.

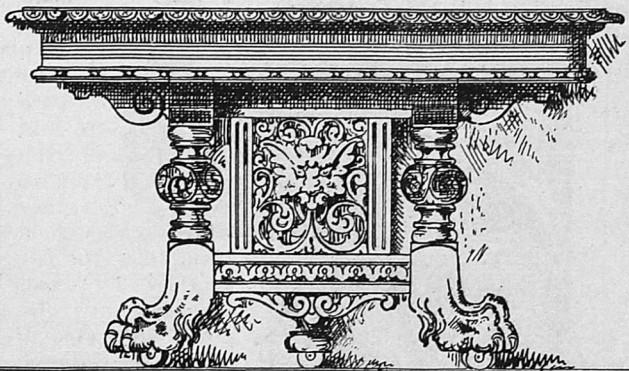
The walls may be painted, for two-thirds of their height a neutral color, not light enough to show finger-marks, and, if it is not intended to have many pictures, a little simple stenciling may be done in a darker shade of color.

Dividing this portion from



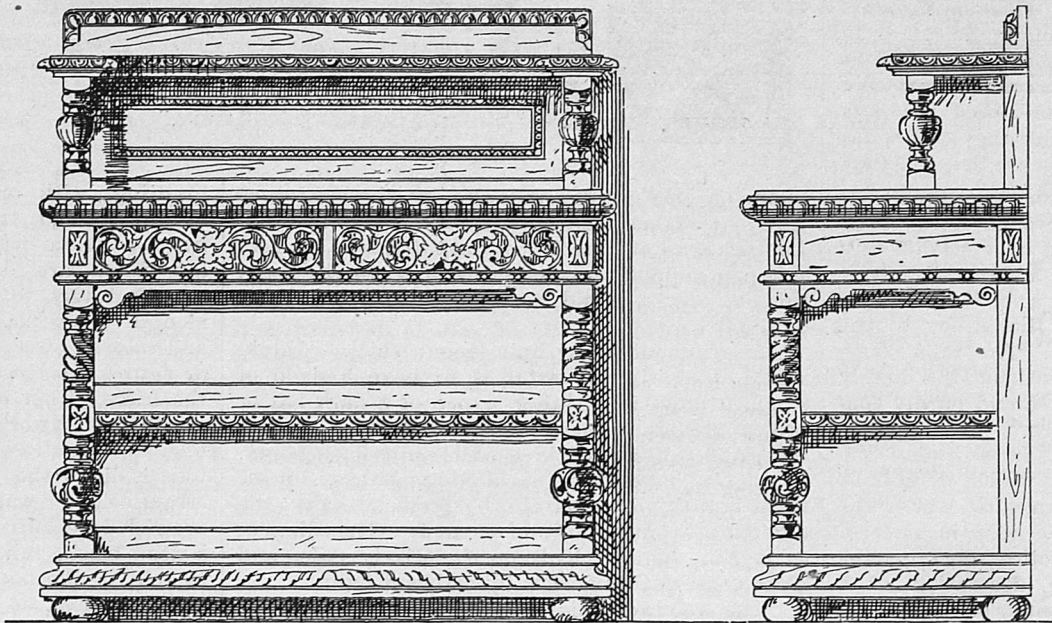
DINING ROOM CHAIRS

Jas. Thomson
1882



DINING ROOM FURNITURE
EXTENSION TABLE

Jas. Thomson
1882



DINING ROOM FURNITURE
SIDE TABLE

Jas. Thomson
1882

ANTIQUE CHAIRS AND TABLES.

THE chairs, extension table and side table, shown upon this page, are part of the scheme for antique furnishing commenced in the December Number, where we gave the sideboard and portion of the wall and window of a dining-room.

The chairs should be upholstered in dark brown embossed leather and studded with large brass nails; the carving of both chairs and tables should correspond with the sideboard in being rather rough in execution, and without much finish after leaving the chisel of the workman.

The taste of the times has a decided tendency toward old styles of various kinds; the Colonial seems to be assuming popularity, and it has many features that make it very attractive; all phases of the Renaissance are in demand, and the French and Spanish Renaissance particularly are favored.

the upper third of the wall, which may be called the frieze, a rail to hang the pictures from, or a small shelf for china, may be placed. Of course it would be necessary to plug the walls for the rail or shelf, and as this increases the expense and injures the plastering, and the patching rendered necessary thereby usually shows through the painting, sooner or later, it will be found better to adopt the simpler plan of fixing a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch iron gas pipe, with ornamental holdfasts which can be driven in between the bricks; this will serve the double purpose of picture rod and mold for dividing the upper portion of the wall from the lower.

The upper third of the wall may be painted a lighter tint of the color than that below, and, as it is likely to get dirty very soon where gas is much used, it might be painted in distemper, which could be easily washed off and redone when required. For this reason, it would not be advisable to do anything elaborate, such as animal or figure painting; but, instead, a simple stencil pattern or border in distemper, with panels at intervals, in which figure tiles, let in flush with the face of the plaster, would be both effective and comparatively inexpensive.

The staircase, as a rule, is such a wretched affair that it is difficult to know what to do with it. If it happens to form portion of the entrance hall, then the same scheme of decoration must be continued. If it is distinct from the entrance hall, the walls may have a painted dado of a somewhat darker tint than those in the entrance hall, with stenciling in a lighter color upon it, and finished with a dado mold corresponding in height to the hand-rail. The woodwork, as a rule, is so meagre and bad that it had better be painted a quiet warm tone of red or brown, in order to attract as little notice as possible; the margins of the stairs may also be treated in the same way. The walls may be stenciled in order to form panels or frames for pictures, and a deep frieze, with a bold stencil ornament, will go a long way to improve what is generally the dreariest portion of the house.

DINING-ROOM.

The general plan of decoration should be sombre, but at the same time cheerful, or, in other words, deep in tone, but not dull. It may have a painted dado of good dark tone, with stenciling or hand-painting upon it; for this kind of work the designs of Mr. Lewis F. Day are admirably suited. There should be a dado mold or chair-rail about two feet nine inches from the floor, to prevent the chairs from damaging the paint. The walls, of course, would have to be plugged for it, and, in order to get over the difficulty of the plaster, it had better be a flat rail, about three inches wide, rather than a bold projecting mold; if this is done, most of the injury to the plaster would be covered by it. The rails, sometimes, if not heavy, are fixed with needles simply driven into the plaster, but I should hardly consider this method sufficiently secure.

Occasionally you will find, in stripping the paper off the walls of houses which were built about a century ago, the grounds to which the chair-rails were originally fixed. An instance of this occurred under my own notice some months ago, when superintending the decoration of a house of this description. I found, also, that the walls of both dining-room and drawing-room had been painted in panels, having scrolls and bunches of flowers in the corners, not very artistic certainly, but immensely superior to the paper which was removed. In a case where the dado is stenciled in panels, it will be found best to have at least two varieties, one broad and the other narrow, so that when necessary two broad ones or two narrow ones may go together, in order to prevent any great disparity in the spacing of the panels.

If there are to be many pictures, the walls above the dado may be painted a good warm brown or chocolate color, as this forms a capital background for them; or, if papered, use one of an all-over pattern in which the colors are well blended.

There would be the usual picture rail or rod

with frieze above, which, supposing the room to be about eleven feet high, should not be more than twelve or fifteen inches deep. A running painted or stencil pattern, with painted panels or tiles at intervals, will be found suitable for a narrow frieze of this description.

The general tone of the cornice should be lighter than the frieze, but darker than the ceiling, and picked out in colors to emphasize the moldings. Sometimes one meets with immense, ugly cornices in comparatively low rooms. In such cases a good plan is to cut off one or two of the bottom members, if it can be done without disfiguring the cornice entirely. A case of this sort occurred under my own notice, where we removed three and a half inches of the cornice, and considerably improved its appearance and that of the room as well.

In rooms under eleven feet high it will often be found better to omit the dado, or, rather, to carry up the dado for about two-thirds of the height of the wall, letting the upper third form a deep frieze, which may be painted in distemper, and stenciled with foliage, birds and animals, not in one flat tint or shade of tinting only, but in various shades and tints produced by mingling the

it may be easily cleaned. The painted walls are also better varnished, for the same reason, but when required as a background for pictures, should be flatted.

It is a good plan, in painting a room, if there is the least suspicion of damp in the walls, to start with two coats of red lead, and let it be worked well into the pores of the plaster.

The ceiling may be formed into panels, with very light molded wooden ribs, which can be screwed to the laths, if the latter are ordinarily strong ones, and a fairly good effect may be produced by this means very cheaply. The whole may be painted in oil or distemper; if not white, then a warm gray or cream color, the ribs picked out in one or two darker shades, and the panels may have a little simple stenciling, but the less that is done in this way the better. In place of ribs the ceiling might be divided into compartments or panels, by bold lines in distemper, with a stencil border inside; or, if the room is small, a large scroll, commencing in one corner with leaves and flowers, may be painted over the whole ceiling.

In dining-room decorations, tapestries, hangings, curtains and everything that is likely to retain the smell of food or smoke, should be avoided.

DRAWING-ROOM.

The general scheme of decoration for the drawing-room should, above all, be bright and cheerful, and everything stiff and formal should be excluded.

As it is in this room that the ladies of the house will spend the greater portion of their time, we should be especially careful in its decoration so as to produce a good effect upon their feelings and tempers.

In houses near a large town it will be best to avoid using velvet or silk for dados, or hanging of damask or tapestry for the walls, as they would become so soon shabby from the dust and dirt continually settling upon them. The women-kind, of course, are all strongly in favor of this mode of decoration, but even they would see the necessity for avoiding it when they have considered the trouble it would be to keep clean. A dado is, perhaps hardly as suitable for a drawing-room as a dining-

room, since there is generally more furniture standing against the walls, such as book-case, cabinets and the like, and the dado mold, or chair-rail, often cuts these very awkwardly, besides, a good piece of furniture always looks best when the ground behind it is unbroken.

I cannot suggest a better treatment for the walls than to hang a really good paper for two-thirds of their height, one that will look bright, cheerful and in-

teresting, with or without pictures. The frieze above can be treated in various ways; it may have a frieze paper harmonizing with that below—there are designs, nowadays, by the best manufacturers, to suit their wall papers—or ornamental canvas plaster may be applied to the walls, and colored after the manner of Wedgwood ware; or figures, foliage and animals may be painted on the frieze, either in oil or distemper.

The woodwork may be painted either to harmonize or contrast with the walls; if their general tone is light the woodwork may be either white, cream color or warm gray; if the paper and frieze are rich in coloring, the woodwork may be painted a dead black, relieved by picking out the molds in gold, or the door panels may be entirely covered with gold leaf, as a ground for painted decoration.

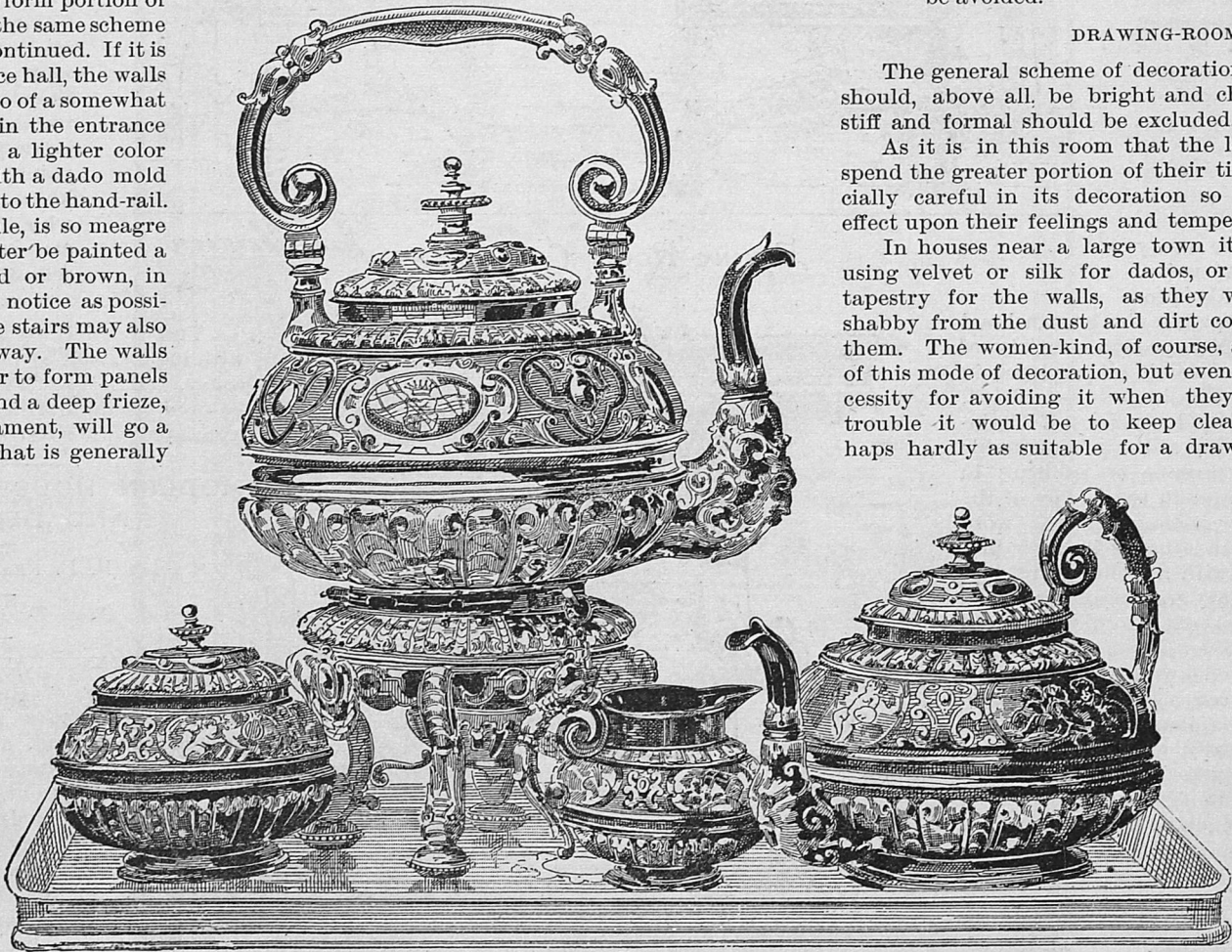
The ceiling and cornice may be treated somewhat similar to the dining-room.

The floor margins may be varnished or painted in the usual way, or, what is better, the floor may be covered with thin parquetry, secured to a canvas back, or it may be used only as a margin, and the carpet in the centre would equalize the difference of level.

BEDROOMS.

Bedrooms, if it were not for the expense attending it, I should recommend to be painted throughout.

It often happens, especially if there is much outside wall, that they get very damp, on account of there being fires in them so seldom. This is injurious to health in various ways: the paper being damp will collect the dust, and with it germs



SILVER TEA SERVICE—FROM "LE REVUE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS."

colors on the palette, and also by the dexterous handling of the stencil brush in laying them on. Another plan of treating a deep frieze is to have a design painted on canvas and fixed to the wall; this, of course, could be removed when occasion required.

A treatment for a dining-room which, I think, would be fairly successful, is to have a dado of stamped imitation leather paper of a dark red or brown ground, a wall paper above of a neutral blue, and a frieze of blue and white flock paper. It is very necessary, in choosing papers, to see them both by day and also by artificial light; the difference in appearance of some is extraordinary; as a rule, yellows look comparatively pale, and blues considerably darker by artificial light.

The woodwork may be painted in two tints of brown, dark red or green, harmonizing with the walls, and, where the room is papered, a good plan is to paint the panels of the doors the same tone as the ground of the paper, the stiles and rails a darker shade, and to pick out the molds in a still darker color, or in blue or black. The panels may be stenciled or hand-painted, but, as a rule, a very little suffices to relieve them, and it should be done in quiet neutral colors. Another way is to fill in the panels with Lincrusta Walton.

The floor should have stained and varnished margins, about two or three feet wide, but if the floor boards are not good enough for this, they may be painted and varnished. The first coat should be as nearly as possible the same as the finishing color, so that scratches may not be seen upon it. All the woodwork should be varnished, so that